

FACT SHEET
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 7
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

RECENT ACTION

- On November 13, 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and nine environmental groups agreed upon a schedule for EPA to promulgate air quality designations for the 8-Hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard.
- The EPA must promulgate air quality designations for the 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards by April 15, 2004.

HOW THE DESIGNATION PROCESS WILL WORK

- States and tribes must submit their recommendations for attainment/nonattainment areas of the 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) by July 15, 2003.
- If the EPA determines that a modification to a recommendation is necessary, EPA will notify the State no later than 120 days prior to promulgating the designations.
- EPA has outlined the designation process in March 28, 2000 Guidance available at www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg
- The existing March 28, 2000 guidance outlines how states and tribes should determine appropriate boundaries for the attainment and nonattainment areas. The term “nonattainment” means an area has had, or has contributed to, nearby ozone violations, over a three year period, generally 2000-2002.
- Generally, areas with monitors showing violations of the 8-Hour Ozone level during 2000-2002 would be designated as nonattainment. Surrounding counties contributing to those violations should be included in nonattainment areas.

BACKGROUND

- In 1997, the ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard was reviewed, and the EPA recommended that the ozone standard be changed from 0.12 parts per million of ozone measured over one hour to a standard of 0.08 parts per million measured over eight hours, with the average fourth highest concentration over a three-year period determining whether an area is in compliance.
- The revised standard recognizes current scientific view that the previous ozone standard of 0.12 parts per million was not sufficiently protective of public health.

- Two laws require EPA to designate areas as attainment or nonattainment for the 8-Hour ozone standard. Those laws are the Clean Air Act and the Transportation Act for the 21st Century (known as TEA-21)

OZONE AND HEALTH

- Ground-level ozone is formed when emissions of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds react in the presence of sunlight. Sources for these emissions include power plants, factories, motor vehicles, chemical solvents, and consumer products
- When inhaled, even at very low levels, ground-level ozone can cause acute respiratory symptoms, such as coughing and discomfort in the throat and chest; aggravate asthma; reduce lung function; inflame and damage lung tissue; and impair the body's immune response to respiratory infection.
- Children-especially those with asthma- are at the greatest risk from ozone pollution. During the summer, when concentrations of ground-level ozone are highest, children playing outside are most likely to experience respiratory symptoms and effects.
- By moving from a one-hour measurement to an eight-hour measurement, the standard will be more protective of public health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Boundary guidance for the 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard is available on EPA's internet site. www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg
- More information about the 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard is available at the following websites:
 1. EPA's Decision on New Air Quality Standards
<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/naaqsfin>
 2. Ozone- National Ambient Air Quality Standard
http://www.epa.gov/ttn/naaqs/standards/ozone/s_o3_index.html
 3. 8-hour Ozone NAAQS Implementation Rule Development
<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/naaqs/ozone/o3imp8hr/>
- For additional information about the 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard call U.S. EPA, Region 7, Leland Daniels, at (913) 551-7651 or Sharon Reinders at the Office of Air Planning & Standards, (919) 541-5284.